

Blood sciences

Healthcare science staff working in the blood sciences may collect blood from patients for examination in pathology laboratories, carry out tests on blood to diagnose illness, or ensure that blood from donors is matched so that it can be given to patients when needed.

If you work in blood sciences, you'll play a crucial role in the diagnosis of illness by helping doctors choose the best type of treatment for patients, and monitoring its effectiveness.



Overview

Haematology is the study of blood and blood-forming tissues. In this area, you'll play a major role in the diagnosis and monitoring of patients with disorders of the blood and bone marrow, for example:

In the blood sciences, you may be investigating new treatments for leukaemia and blood-related cancers

- leukaemia and related blood cancers
- anaemia
- haemophilia and other bleeding and clotting problems
- sickle cell disease [1]

Working life

Healthcare science staff specialising in the blood sciences will typically be found working in:

- hospital pathology laboratories and laboratories in specialist hospitals (including working in haematology, haemostasis and thrombosis [2])
- the community, for example in specialist clinics
- blood transfusion services

If you're a phlebotomist [3], you're a specialised healthcare science assistant or associate [4] who collects blood from patients for examination in pathology laboratories, the results of which provide valuable information to diagnosing illness.

If you work in blood transfusion in hospitals, you'll ensure that blood from donors is matched so that it can be given to patients when needed, for example during an operation.

If you work for the NHS Blood and Transplant Service [5], you'll be involved in the collection, processing and issuing of blood components and investigating difficulties encountered with blood and tissue matching.

Who would I work with?

You will typically be part of a team including healthcare scientists, biomedical scientists [6], practitioners, healthcare science assistants and associates [4] working in clinical biochemistry [7], genetics [8], histocompatibility and immunogenetics [9], immunology and other related areas.

Want to learn more?

- Find out more about the entry requirements, skills and interests required to enter a career in blood sciences [10]
- Find out more about the training you'll receive for a career in blood sciences [11]
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Pay and conditions

Most jobs in the NHS are covered by the Agenda for Change (AfC) [12] pay system. This pay system covers all staff (including healthcare science staff) except doctors, dentists and the most senior managers. NHS healthcare science staff in the blood sciences will typically be on AfC [13] bands 2 – 9, depending on their precise role and level of responsibility. So for example, as a healthcare science practitioner, you'd usually start on band 5, with opportunities to progress to more senior positions. Trainee clinical scientists train at band 6 level, and qualified clinical scientists are generally appointed at band 7. With experience and further qualifications, you could apply for posts up to band 9.

NHS healthcare science staff will usually work a standard 37.5 hours per week. They may work a shift pattern.

Terms and conditions of service can vary for employers outside the NHS.

Where the role can lead

There are opportunities in the blood sciences to develop your career through further study and experience and then apply for roles in management, research, teaching and further specialisation.

Healthcare science staff are often at the forefront of research and innovation, so that patients are continually receiving the very best healthcare. For example, if you work in the blood sciences, you may be investigating new treatments for leukaemia and blood-related cancers.

Job market and vacancies

Job market information

In November 2018, there were 6,123 clinical scientists registered with the Health and Care Professions Council [14].

The [15]NHS Scientist Training Programme (STP) [16] attracts many more applicants than there are places and so there is considerable competition for places.

Looking for job vacancies

When you're looking for job or apprenticeship vacancies, there are a number of sources you can use, depending on the type of work you're seeking.

Check vacancies carefully to be sure you can meet the requirements of the person specification before applying and to find out what the application process is. You may need to apply online or send a C.V. for example.

For the NHS Scientist Training Programme (STP) [15] there is an annual recruitment cycle. Applications usually open in early January for the intake in the following autumn.

Applications for the STP [17] should be made through the National School for Healthcare Science website [18], where you can also find information about the programme and the recruitment process.

Key sources relevant to vacancies in the health sector:

- Vacancies in organisations delivering NHS healthcare can be found on the NHS Jobs website [19]
- Vacancies in local government can be found on the Local Government Jobs website [20] and the Jobs Go Public website [21]
- Vacancies for apprenticeships appear on the NHS Jobs website [19] and the Gov.uk website [22]

As well as these sources, you may find suitable vacancies in the health sector by contacting local employers directly, searching in local newspapers and by using the Universal Jobmatch tool [23].

Find out more about applications and interviews. [24]

Volunteering is an excellent way of gaining experience (especially if you don't have enough for a specific paid job you're interested in) and also seeing whether you're suited to a particular type of work. It's also a great way to boost your confidence and you can give something back to the community.

Find out more about volunteering and gaining experience [25].

Further information

For further information about working and training in blood sciences, please contact:

- British Blood Transfusion Society [26]
- British Society of Haemostasis and Thrombosis [27]
- Health and Care Professions Council [28]
- Institute of Biomedical Science [29]
- National Association of Phlebotomists [30]
- National School for Healthcare Science [18]
- UCAS [31]

Other roles that may interest you

- Biomedical science [32]
- Donor carer [33]
- Haematology (doctor) [34]
- Clinical bioinformatics health informatics [35]

Source URL:<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/life-sciences/blood-sciences>

Links

- [1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Sickle_cell_disease
[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Thrombosis> [3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/phlebotomist> [4] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/clinical-support-staff/healthcare-science-assistant-and-associate> [5] <http://www.nhsbt.nhs.uk/>
[6] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/life-sciences/biomedical-science>
[7] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/life-sciences/clinical-biochemistry>
[8] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/life-sciences/genetics>
[9] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/life-sciences/histocompatibility-and-immunogenetics>
[10] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/life-sciences/blood-sciences/entry-requirements-skills-and-interests> [11] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/life-sciences/blood-sciences/training-development-and-registration> [12] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/about/careers-nhs/nhs-pay-and-benefits/agenda-change-pay-rates> [13] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#AfC> [14] <http://www.hcpc-uk.org>

[15] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/considering-or-university/not-studying-health-related-degree/nhs-scientist-training-programme> [16] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/going-university/not-studying-health-related-degree/nhs-scientist-training-programme>
[17] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#STP> [18] <http://www.nshcs.hee.nhs.uk/>
[19] <http://www.jobs.nhs.uk> [20] <http://www.lgjobs.com/> [21] <http://www.jobsgopublic.com/>
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[24] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/career-planning/planning-your-career/applications-and-interviews>
[25] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/i-am/secondary-school-or-fe-college/gaining-experience>
[26] <http://www.bbts.org.uk> [27] <http://www.bsht.org.uk/> [28] <http://www.hcpc-uk.org/> [29] <http://www.ibms.org/> [30] <http://www.phlebotomy.org> [31] <http://www.ucas.com>
[32] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/life-sciences/biomedical-science> [33] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/clinical-support-staff/donor-carer>
[34] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/pathology/haematology-doctor>
[35] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-science/roles-healthcare-science/clinical-bioinformatics/clinical-bioinformatics-health-informatics>